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ABSTRACT

Findings of this study indicate that preservice teachers engaged in student teaching tend to become less humanistic and more authoritarian in their relations with students as the student teaching experience progresses. In addition, inner-city student teachers tend to be more custodial before they begin student teaching than are suburban student teachers after they complete student teaching. The sample for the study consisted of fifty-eight secondary school student teachers in suburban schools and twenty-seven secondary student teachers in inner-city schools. Subjects were administered the Pupil Control Ideology Inventory Questionnaire during prestudent teaching orientation and again during the last week of student teaching. Survey results indicate that student teachers tend to enter student teaching with an idealistic and sometimes erroneous concept of what is involved regarding discipline maintenance in the classroom, thus undergoing a marked change toward more dominant classroom control forms as the experience progresses. The more stringent screening process for student teachers in inner-city schools appears to account in part for the finding that these student teachers are more custodial before they begin student teaching than are suburban student teachers after they complete student teaching. (MB)

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Inner-City Teachers More Authoritarian

For several years classroom control has been identified as a serious concern of many parties, including teachers, parents, citizens, legislators, Congressmen, etc. (1)

Although student teachers typically anticipate greater difficulty with pupil control than they actually experience (2), for these neophytes in teaching, discipline appears as an imposing and seemingly insurmountable obstacle to their success (and even survival) in the classroom. Classroom discipline is an especially acute problem for the teacher and the student teacher in the inner-city school. This study focused upon student teachers in suburban schools (over 90% white enrollment) and inner-city schools (over 90% black enrollment) and their attitudes toward classroom control.

Recently a strong and persistent trend toward humanizing all aspects of the educational process, including pupil control, has been developing. Obviously, to humanize the teacher candidate is one of the primary methods of doing this. It was the intent of this research to determine the effect of the student teaching experience as a factor in the student teacher becoming more humanistic or custodial regarding pupil control.

In order to assess the attitudes of student teachers toward classroom control, they were administered the Pupil Control Ideology Inventory (PCI), a standardized Likert-type questionnaire which characterizes a teacher as being humanistic or custodial regarding pupil control. A humanistic teacher denotes one who is accepting and trusting of students and has confidence in students to be self-disciplining and responsible. A custodial teacher is

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characterized as one who stresses maintenance of order, distrust of students, and a punitive, moralistic approach to pupil control. All student teachers were administered the PCI during their orientation session prior to beginning student teaching, and again during their last week of student teaching. In addition, at the beginning of each semester, public school teachers who supervised the student teachers in the study were administered the PCI. The sample for the study consisted of 58 secondary student teachers in suburban schools and 27 secondary student teachers in inner-city schools.

Among the most significant and interesting findings of this study was that secondary student teachers in suburban schools were more custodial at the conclusion of their student teaching experience than they were at the beginning of the experience. This may indicate that student teachers tend to enter student teaching with an idealistic and sometimes erroneous concept of what is involved regarding maintaining discipline in the classroom. Whereas the beginning student teacher may enter the student teaching experience with an intention to be humanistic in dealing with students, it appears that the student teacher experiences a marked change during student teaching toward more dominant forms of classroom control.

Another significant finding was that student teachers in the inner-city schools were significantly more custodial before student teaching than were student teachers in suburban schools after student teaching. While this finding lends itself to a number of interesting interpretations, it is important to note that student teachers in the inner-city schools were subjected to more stringent screening processes than were student teachers in the suburban schools. This screening was designed to determine the suitability of the student teacher for teaching in the inner-

city school. In addition, since all students who student teach in these types of schools are volunteers, they very likely have some prior knowledge of the inner-city school setting (either through reading or experience), including the needs of students and demands upon teachers in these schools. In addition, they also recognize that one of their most pressing needs is to control the students in order to be an effective teacher in these schools. Thus, a "select" group of screened student teachers was chosen to teach in these schools.

The major findings of this study indicate that the student teaching experience did cause student teachers to become more custodial and less humanistic in their relations with students. In addition, the more stringent screening process used with student teachers in the inner-city schools appears to account in part for the finding that those inner-city student teachers were more custodial before they began student teaching than were the suburban student teachers after they completed student teaching.

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